SHIFTING GEARS

THE CHANGING MEANING OF WORK IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1920-1980

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS

INTERVIEWEE: Ms. X and Ms. Y (Sisters)

INTERVIEWER: Martha Norkunas

DATE: July 27, 1988

TRANSCRIBER: Lynda Luden

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

MN: OK. First I want to say the date which is July 27, 1988 and I'm with __(interviewees)_____. Is that how you pronounce it,_____?

MS. X: Yes.

MN: OK. Usually, I try to get a little family history about when your family came to the area, but I think I'll do that at the end, instead, and I'll start right off with, well, since it's two of you, you can take turns. (Laughter) I'd like to start off with the work history, and then we'll go back and talk a little bit about your, how your family came here to America, afterwards. So maybe, well, let me start with you then and I'll point this --

MS. X: There you go.

MN: Tell me about working and what was your first job and--

MS. X: I graduated out of high school in 1935 and--

MN: From Gardner High School?

MS. X: From Gardner High School. We both were born in Wakefield, Mass. and I, after I graduated from High School there weren't that many jobs available, as a matter of fact, it was a very difficult time, so I took . little jobs, like I was a, did some

clerical work for an electrician, and, but there didn't seem to be much future in that and I went to Brookline, Mass., and my girl friend at that time, she graduated at the same time but I took a business course, she didn't have any kind of a background, but her brother was a manager of First National Stores and the superintendent of the stores use to come in routinely and he came and told Henny one day that he needed two girls to work at his home as a governess and a cook. Well, Solina family girls are terrific cooks so Gwen and I went, and it was just about a half a mile from Boston College, and Wakefield and Chelsea and all those, Boston, they were right at our fingertips. But, I lasted only three weeks. I couldn't take it, I was the governess. And the little boy was so adorable and the girl. The little boy couldn't say "Love". He'd say, "Yaura, you yuv me, You yuv me, Mama, you got a _____ (unintelligible) for me, you got a _____(unintelligible). Oh, he was adorable. But I stayed only three weeks. I came home, told my mother and father. He says, "No, if you're not happy there, " he said, "you just have to sweat it out," you know.

MN: You just didn't like --

MS. X: No, well, the man was terrific, he was great. They were Catholic and we'd go to Mass every morning at Boston College but she was from the wrong side of the tracks, married into the right side, and she made life pretty miserable for us. But Gwen didn't have any background, so she came home, she stayed two or

three weeks, then she went back. But she's a terrific cook, and she stayed two or three month, I guess, then she came home. But, then I worked, after that, 5 & 10, Woolworth's 5 and dime and all this time I was going to Heywood-Wakefield Co., putting in my application, and --

MN: In Wakefield?

MS. X: No, --

MN: In Gardner.

MS. X: In Gardner, This was in 1935, I graduated from high school here, and, 19-, then, 1937, I was working, 36, end of '36, I began working working at a 5 and 10 and, 'course, that was a medial good job, too, and my father had, had been working for Heywood-Wakefield Co. and when the company moved to Gardner, we came along with the company, I was just a freshman when we came, and so, as I said, I kept going to Heywood-Wakefield Co., trying to get a job there and it was very discouraging --

MN: Did you care what you would do at Heywood-Wakefield?

MS. X: No, no, it didn't matter so long as I got in, you know, then I figured I could get a hold, you know, and take one step at time. And, February of 1937, I finally got a job, thanks to my sister and my father. As many times as I went, the managers, personnel managers there would come out and interview, and nothing, there's nothing here, and nothing, nothing, nothing, I was getting pretty discouraged. So my mother, my father,

and Archie, wrote a letter to Mr. Greenwood who was the president, and he wrote back, told how discouraged I was, and my father had worked there many years, and he was at the furniture market at Chicago and he wrote back a letter to my father, and he said as soon as he got back from the market, he would check into the matter, which he did, and I got a job.

MN: Oh.

MS. X: I got a job in a mail department and, part-time mail department, and part-time traffic department. And then with the advertising, and the, and service man -, I had all around background, cause I had gone around every department, except transportation department, that was kind of a unity by itself, and, so I finally got in and I was put in in this office, and this office .

MN: Was this clerical, or --?

MS. X: Well, yes, clerical, you know, and just typing, you know, and I--

MS. Y: Excuse me, in traffic it would be typing the bills of lading, covering the furniture that was going to be, for shipments, you know and a lot of detail work, a lot of detail work was involved, whether you worked in the service department, or the traffic department, or whether you worked in the advertising department. That was a little more colorful, I think, than the other dull jobs --

MS. X: Yeah.

MS: Y: Cause it was bouncing, you know, it was always moving,

there were deadlines, and there were pictures and photographs, etc.,, a lot more going.

MS. X: So as I said, I got my foot in the door and, I wasn't getting discouraged but, you know, the war came and I was put in the war department, and that was quite interesting. I don't know whether you know this, but Heywood-Wakefield Co. was 90% a wood furniture fac -,,manufacturer, not only furniture, but school furniture, also, and they, they were awarded, one big, first _____(unintelligible) and five added stars for taking on all the steel work, you know like missiles, and now they had a contract for wood trucks. too, but this company changed from 90% wood to 90% metal manufacturing plant to coincide with all the war effort and making all the things that they needed for war in the steel field, you know, so they made missiles, and, made projectiles, and things like that, so after the war ended, well, I--

MN: Were you on assembly or --?

MS. X; No, No, this was the office, in the office, the man who headed that department was a real sharp man, he was, he really knew what he was doing and it was fun working, in a way you felt you were giving a little effort for the war, too, you know, and I can't remember when, that was '45, '46, I think I was in, back in the advertising department, I'm a little hazy about that, 1947, 47, I was bouncing around, 1948 I was in the advertising department again, and this advertising department had taken more meaning, like MS. Y was saying, they had

to start advertising cause after the war, it was going to be very, very competitive. And the southern manufacturers didn't use solid wood like Heywood-Wakefield did, they used veneers, mostly, and -. So 1948, I, I was working in the advertising department. There's a fellow who was working for the union, not for the union, but the union matters concerning the company and they decided they would make him a personnel manager because he seemed to have the kind of intuition, and, that would be good for that department, and when he did get that job, he asked for me to come and work for him, which was fine, Al was very nice, and so I went and I was there two months when I got a call to come up to the main office on the second floor. I couldn't imagine what was going to happen. I just couldn't imagine, to be called up to the executive floor, you know.

MN: Did you think you'd done something wrong?

MS. X: Yes, oh definitely, oh definitely. I thought --

MS. Y: Fear, you know.

MS. X: Fear, you know. This is a job you got, you worked for and you hoped for, you dreamt about and, well, the girl, the people that owned this house, the daughter, the family were friendly with our family and the daughters, as a matter of fact, three of us, several of us, we were real friends and she was Mr. Greenwood's secretary. The woman before her had gotten married kind of late in life, and she, trans--, uh, commute from Malden to Gardner, she thought that was too much and she

as I said, she got married late in life and, so, Adele was promoted to that job. So, when I got the notice to come and see Mr. Greenwood, she and I were walking down tht street and she noticed I was very, very tensed up, you know, I couldn't imagine, I finally said to her, I said, "Adele," I says, "why am I being called to the president's office tomorrow?" And she could see I was real nervous about it. And she says, "I shouldn't say anything to you, _____ but you are going to be transferred to work in the treasurer's office for half a day and half a day for Mr. Greenwood." So that was, and then, her family, her mother and father, they had a dau--, older daughter, and she had married and she was living in California, and the son who got out of the service decided he would not return to Gardner, he was going to stay in California, so there was only Adele and her mother and father, they decided that they would go to California, you know, get rid of the house and so forth. They had a pretty rich uncle, he had an old crazy store on Main St. sold fruits and little things like that, and he was a bachelor and I guess he'd saved up quite a bit of money, so they bought this house. well, when they were, when they decided to go out to California, they told our family, and my mother and father had been looking for a house to buy, and so we came over one Friday night and we quoted a price and they said, this is our price, and they decided they would , my family would go home, think about it once again, as my family would do the same. We met the next day, we

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came up, they came down and a deal was set for the house. And the same day, it was October 1st, 1949, and that same day I got my job as Executive Secretary for Richard Neil Greenwood, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Heywood-Wakefield Co. And I worked for him for 16½ years. Wonderful, wonderful years.

MN: Did you think of it as a career?

MS. X: Well, yes, but I was getting a little, well, let's see, I started 1937 and I got the job in 1949, it took me 12 years, you know, but before that I was beginning to get discouraged and this gal we knew, she was in Germany, and she wrote and said, c'mon ___(X)_____come over to Germany, she says, they need help so badly here, this was after the war, and I, I told my mother and father, my mother, my mother just fell down in a faint, she was in Chicago, living in Chicago, who's going to take care of us, who's going to this and that, so I said, well, OK, prior to this, _____(unintelligible) mother had a heart attack, and so I felt my priority was at home. And so, that's what, that, that, that's it.

MS. Y: This was a Syrian family and they were --

MS. X: Really Lebanese, Lebanese.

MS. Y: Lebanese, and they were very, very close and it must have been very, very difficult for Adele to give up her job as secretary to the president. And at that time, we didn't think of it as careers, we thought that we had good jobs.

MS. X: You, You're right there ___(Y)_____.

MS. Y: It was the idea that you had a good job and I think I mentioned in our last conversation that Heywood-Wakefield Co. definitely, I'm trying to think of the word, well, they made you feel as a member of a family --

MS. X: Definitely.

MS. Y: --this was a great advantage, the workers in the plant, were doing the prooduction work, you were doing the secretarial, or whatever you were doing in the office, you were contributing, you were a, when you say gear, you were a gear in the wheel, or a spoke in the wheel and this family idea was very strongly--

MS. X: Promoted.

MS. Y: --promoted among the people. You'd feel like a stinker if you left, you know, really, I mean, you'd think you were deserting, you know, somebody that had given you a job and a start and so forth, and so on. Oh, there were a lot of people that considered going elsewhere, I mean, with the thought of doing better, but there weren't too, too many opportunities at that particular time. You had 10, 15 years all ready racked up and just to go to another company and probably do just as well or worse, you, you'd do a lot of thinking about it, you know, and Heywood-Wakefield were the largest manufacturers and the largest employers of--

MS. X: Gardner.

MS. Y: --of Gardner so everybody that worked at Heywood's, you know, was pretty satisfied, you know. Oh, I work at Heywood's.

It wasn't the idea that you were thinking of a career. I --

MS. X: You had stability, that's what people were really looking for. Stability after the war, you know, and during the war, well, the company's personnel rose from about, what was it, 300 to about 900, I think, during the war years. That's when my mother started working, she didn't work before, and a lot of women got jobs at Heywood-Wakefield Co. because of the war, because they needed personnel, they needed people, employees, and so forth, you know. And these people stayed on, after, many of them, you know, then they started the furniture up again. Lumber was very difficult to get because most of it was taken over by the war department for the war effort, and after the war, well, lumber wasn't going to be that plentiful, either, just had to grow the trees. And, so, they were, like winding up of the war. Lot of people still, and then when the furniture started, you know, building up, well, people stayed on,too, you know, my father--

MS. Y: There were a lot of fellows coming back from the war --

MS. X: Right. Those that had been drafted for the war, who had worked at Heywood-Wakefield Co., they were assured of a job upon their return, you know, unless something happened to them.

MN: What happened to the women who'd worked during the war?

MS X: They, a lot of them kept on.A lot of them --

MN: Did they have the same jobs?

MS. X: No, because furniture was starting to build up and my, Mr. Greenwood, was responsible for the way furniture was being

manufactured, and there were days, before he took rein of the company, his father was the president, as a matter of fact, the Greenwood Memorial Pool is donated by my boss's father, Levi Greenwood. The furniture was made, if you were going to buy a dining room set, you'd go to one dealer and you would buy the table, you'd go to another dealer to buy the chairs, you'd go to another dealer to buy the hutch, or whatever, you know, and the same thing with bedrooms and living room pieces. My boss thought it was kind of ridiculous, so he came out with a package, and I remember that line, _____ wasn't working then, it was a wheat and champagne finishes in modern pattern, --

MS. Y: _____(unintelligible), he was, and they still are, mainly considered one of the best--

MS. X: Oh, yeah.

MS. Y: -- if not--

MS. X: The best.

MS. Y: --the best, manufacturers of Colonial furniture.

MS. X: Because Heywood-Wakefield Co. was the oldest manufacturer in Mass-, in the United States.

MS. Y: In this area.

MS. X: No, in United States. 1826, they were five brothers had a partnership and they started making furniture. Chairs, and then, Gardner was considered mostly a chair manufacturing company at first, but see, now the picture has turned, and --

(Both speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. Y: But this is a different type of line that they had to

introduce because the competition, they were going into sleek lines, smooth lines, just like your refrigerator changes, like the TV's took on a new look and everything was kind of streamlined, modern feeling, you know, and they had to adjust, to the market. Now, you must have seen the, and you probably had something to do with it, I don't know, Joe Parr, the fellow that is going to give the demonstration at the Heritage State Park --

MN: I haven't actually met him, but I hope to.

MS. X: OH, I hope you do, he's a great guy, he's a terrific guy. Oh, yeah, do get in with him. (Both speak at same time)

MS. Y: Did you see the article, the news, the Telegram did on him? Well, he wrote, and a lot of things that Joe said in that particular article, well, they're, they're, solid truth, I mean, he was with the company, he was a designer, he knew that things had to change and --

MS. X: But not so much, __(Y)__, because Joe was given a job as the designed, but not as the first class designer, they had top designers, Karl Otto, Count Sisenowski, and, I can't remember the others.

MS. Y: Leo Gerard.

MS.X: Oh, Leo Gerard was great, because he stayed with the company a very long time. But they'd get these different designers, because the volume in production was not as much as they wanted so they had to come out with different lines. Well, the one that Karl Otto designed--

MS. Y: Oh, brother.

MS. X: Oh, I'm telling you --

MS. Y: It was square, square lines and he was very, very square. And, and it was such a departure from the flowing lines that we knew and the colonial features, you know, that marked the--

MS. X: Patterns.

MS. Y: --patterns and everything else, and oh, they said, this was it, this was it, I mean, this was every better that the Swedish designs, you know, --

MS. X: They bombed like anything --

MS. Y: Oh, yeah.

MS. X: --but in a way that was good that that happened, because after that, when they had the designers come up with a line,, they would ask the girls on the 3rd floor, and they'd ask (Y), to come down to the experimental department and they had built on an experimental basis, the lines that this particular designer had come up with. And they would ask, especially Paul Parsa, he was a man, the most honest, the truest man I have ever met, so he'd ask (Y), well what do you, he had a deep voice, well, what do you think, (Y)? Got her opinion. (X), May, Adrian, Charlotte, Helen, Fatima? Most of us thought of one thing, and so, Paul Parsa said, I think the girls are right, what they say, they put the line in and it was a success.

MN: And which line was this?

MS. X: I can't remember, now, which line it was. Well, there

were two, or several lines, Now one thing you must realize is that Heywood-Wakefield furniture, when you lift this chair, _____(unintelligible), this is not solid wood, this is what do you --

MN: Not pine? Birch?

MS. Y: No, birch is a solid wood and most of our furniture was made from birch, it was expensive. But that's what the company wanted, a line that would sell, and it did, the Colonial was really the number one seller. Oh, what the heck is this--

MS. Y: We always forget.

MS. X: We, I always remember, you don't say Pine, but --Cherry! Cherry wood, uh huh, and that is not a solid, I mean, parts of it are solid but, but they dealt mostly in solid woods. But when the competition started up in southern states, particularly, because there were no unions down there, you know.

MN: And when would this competition be coming sort of fierce?

MS. X: Oh, after the war, two or three years after the war. And as I told you before, most of the manufacturers down there use veneers, you know.

MS. Y: No veneers so much but they use pine a great deal. We could, readily available, keep it, they had a tremendous market for pine, and it was a soft wood and, this is a hard wood, and --

MS. X: Not cherry, cherry is not a hard wood, birch and maple are.

MS. Y: Well, I thought the cherry wood, too.

MS. X: No, see this is --

MS. Y: They were begin - , they were making a lot of pieces out of pine, and, you know, the years rolled by, people were not looking for longevity, I mean, when you were married, my mother and father, you bought a living room set and that was going to be for life. Anything you bought was going to be for life, and there was a changing trend, at that particular time, people that were in the war were coming back, they were getting married and they couldn't afford to buy the expensive furniture, so they were looking for other lines. And the southern manufacturers were alot cheaper, and they had cheaper labor down there, and they didn't have the unions, so, and then, competition for Heywood-Wakefield to stay in business and command a price for their furniture, and yet they had excellent salesmen, and they did very, very well, until the unions --

MS. X: Started demanding more.

MS. Y: --the big problem, that started to get involved more and more. And more and more younger people were coming into the plant with their elbows out, and they wanted more money, the wanted more benefits.

MS. X: Well, we better not say anything about that, (Y), let that go to some of the people that, yeah, who know, who were involved in the union things and so forth.

MS. Y: Oh, I don't know anything about the union. But I know it was a trend, you know.

MN: But there must have been, just to stay on the topic for a minute, there must have been a, some people must have felt the need for it, I mean in the company?

BOTH: Oh, yes. um hmm.

MS. X: Well, they figured that, you know, more money, better working conditions and so forth. Now my boss was not exactly unhappy with the union, until they began to make too many demands which the company could not afford to give. I mean, the benefits, I mean some, like, hospital benefits, Blue Cross Blue Shield, fine, we contributed to that, then, made other concessions, also, but like everything else the union was beganning, beginning to demand too much. And the company couldn't afford to stay in business with those kinds of demands. So they went on a strike, they, one time they were off six weeks, and, you know, and but that wasn't good for the employees, wasn't good for the company. The employees never, never made up what he lost, let's face it, and what, that was the trend, now, now more or less the other way. You don't have many unions now. You see how much the unionship has gone down since those days? I read an article about it the other day, and also that Teamster's Union, the president just died four weeks ago, and the guy that's taking over, well, they were Marxists in those unions, you know. As a matter of fact, the man, why I mention this, the president after Mr. Greenwood left, he was found in a Caddilac in the trunk, murdered, you know, so anyway, '46, '47 so you see there was

that infiltration, there. But I think it's beginning to turn the other way, because you don't see too many unions, although the south has been unionized, too, because they just had to.

MS. Y: You have to remember, Martha, that these buildings that have been converted now into these beautiful apartments and everything else, they say they're very, very lovely, I think it's the most wonderful thing that has happened to the Heywood-Wakefield buildings along with the State Heritage Park, monies that have beautified the city to a good extent, but these buildings were just corroding. And they would just slowly decay, and crumble, and you know, not probably in my time, but say a hundred years from now, if nobody had done anything with these buildings, why it would just go to waste.

MS . X: You know, also --

MS. Y: Because if you did, excuse me, this was not an up-to-date plant, they didn't have luxurious restrooms for the women and for the men, you know, I mean, it was just a necessity, period. I mean, there was a sink and a toilet, period, that was it. Today, I bet you go to work for Digital, and I bet they have beautiful restrooms for the ladies, I mean, you can go in and have a small _____(unintelligible), but we didn't have those things at Heywood's. And there was no way to attain them because all of the space was given over to production. And unless they built new buildings, what they did instead, was expand and go down south to meet the market, and they had a plant in Newport, Tennessee

MS. X: Yeah, but that was not furniture, ___(Y)___, that was school furniture, school furniture only, and then again, we were tops.

MS. Y: They were quite diversified in alot of their things, they were in school furniture, and they were in --

MS. X: Theater seats.

MS. Y: --house furniture, and they were in theater seating and they were in, we had the _____(unintelligible).

MS. X: That was just a minor. But they had about 7, 8 lines, different production lines, you know, but that, that wasn't very good either because you were developing each, each department with, it wasn't a one big volumne, you know, so furniture was the volume, and school furniture, so when, after the war, they decided they had to do something with the school furniture, which was all wooden before, but now we had a fella, Seth Hendrickson, the man didn't go to 7th grade, but he had it up here. He decided that, after the war, with the lumber shortage and everything, he said, we are not going to get a fair share of the market, we're going to come out with something dramatic. During the war years, he quietly was working on --

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE A

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

MN: No, no, we're really getting somewhere, this is wonderful.

MS. X: Oh, I want going to say. After my boss retired, I

so I made the break, I went back to the advertising department. That's where I stayed until the end.

MN: And that was when?

MS. X: '60, '68, I think. '69, yeah, I was working for Carl, '69, it was when Kathy graduated from college in D.C., I went down. In 1970, we went to Europe, and I was working for the trans-, advertising department still. So, I'd say, about '68.

MN: And you stayed there until '79?

MS. X: No. '77, I think. Then I went to work for the college. Then I went to work at the METP. Then I just retired from both.

MN: The METP?

MS. X: Yeah, that's the building up on --

MS. Y: On Elm St.

MS. X: --on Elm St. You know where the big chair is up there? Well, that was a high school way, way, way back. And when they built the new high school and--

MS. Y: METP. Manage --

MS. X: No, Montachusett Employeement Tech - I forgot what, anyway, the both jobs, the job at the college, I loved it, it was, oh, it's nice up there and I had a wonderful boss. I worked for somebody else who was really top, but only, just between, like. But the personnel manager, Harry Kelly, he was a wonderful man, and I loved it up there, but it was under a CETA program, C-E-T-A, Oh, it was a special program for give, get jobs, and so, I was the last one there, I was the first one out. And so --

worked for the new regime, George and John Heywood. John, I liked very, very much. I liked George, but when it came to business, he just didn't have it up here. And I was unhappy because George was continually going to his secretary. Private secretary, when he, when he took over they both told, both John and Geroge told me we're going to carry on the way Mr. Greenwood did. You're going to pay my bills, ____(X)__, and John said, I'm going to be the president and you're going to be working for me. Fine. For John it was fine, well, for George, it didn't work that way. I was unhappy because this secretary, she was a lovely person, but she, in other words, say, if he, if he asked her a question, had a ques--, answer yes, she would answer yes. No, no. She wouldn't be against. When he'd come up to her with a letter. This is an answer for this letter I wrote and so she'd root through her files, look and look, then she'd come to me, do you think you would have this letter, __(Y)__? I'd say, yeah, I wrote that letter. So that used to get my goat, I mean, if he was going to let me continue in the same way as before, this is not the way my boss did. And when the bills came, forget it. He took the whole table just full of _____(unintelligible) girl wanted to go in another deparment. So Carl wrote a letter to John and said he he would need a replacement. So I told John, you know, I'd like to take that job on a half day basis because this isn't that busy yet, and half day here 'cause there isn't enought work to keep me busy all day. And so John spoke to George about it, and Carl wanted full time,

MN: And what were you telling me about the man in World War II that went to develop the plastics?

MS. X: Yeah, Sev Hendrickson, S-e-v-e-r-i-n Hendrickson. Sev was a real nice man and he worked on the plastics after the war, he told Mr. Greenwood what he had been working on, he had told him, but not in such a _____(unintelligible) manner and he told us, we're going to have fierce competition after the war, and because of the lumber shortage, everybody's gonna try and make plastic school furniture. So--

MS. Y: Like the tops, yeah, we did it -

MS. X: It was called Heywoodite. Hey-wood-ite. Well, when we offered it , it was practically indestructible. We offered it to the, to the dealers, to the, we didn't sell through dealers, we sold through sales men and distributors. The distributors were wild. They couldn't imagine that this thing was gonna be indestructible. They took, they burned the top, they took some SOS, scrubbed it off, this is what it'd do. Later on they had a big fire in a Long Island school, had been 90% equipped with Hey-wood-ite school furniture, chairs and so forth. A team of workers was taken to Long Island, took, had all the equipment, I mean it was _____(unintelligible) and so forth. They cleaned up 85% of the furniture which was almost like, well, which was good as new. %15 had burnt, such severe, excuse me, I'm getting dry, had burned to such an extreme, they couldn't do much with it, but then the people were quite impressed. Then American Seating Co., Brunswick started getting plastics on their--

MS. Y: This was a plastics market, and you can see where it says Hey-wood-ite, Heywood-Wakefield emblem, Heywood-Wakefield Co., well, Carl was very, very clever, and he thought of more things, for instance, he developed, he worked with Sev, evidently, and they made ashtrays of plastic and they gave them to all of their customers, you see, when they went to the market. And, oh, there were a tremendous amount of things that Carl was responsible for, when ball point pencils came out, you know, he was the first to think of putting Heywood-Wakefield Co. on the pencils and giving them out to customers and giving them out to , he did a great deal to stimulate things, you know.

MS. X: He was a great marketer. I mean--

MS. Y: Oh, merchandising, marketing, advertising (Both talk at same time, unintelligible) That's what he teaches at the college.

MN: Backtrack one minute, maybe you could tell me now, I don't know if you want to get something to drink, about your beginnings in the company.

MS. Y: Well, it was kind of short and quick, really. But not really. When I graduated from high school, I had to go through the same thing that, I'll give you a napkin --

MN: Oh, that's all right. (commotion in background) That's lovely, thank you.

MS. Y: It was the same thing. I mean, there was a difficulty in getting a, any kind of a job. You couldn't, you couldn't be fussy. I was a little disappointed that I wasn't able to go

for a year to a commercial art school because I had an inclination in that direction, but there wasn't the money, I mean to go to school. And I thought, well, if I got a job and saved my money, then maybe later on I could go to an art school. But, you know, sometimes your planning and your dreams never do materialize. And I worked first at Florence Stove Co. Now they were a large manufacturer of stoves here in Gardner and I was considered very lucky to get a job there because they gave me $15 a week, and when you started at Heywood's I think it was something like $12 a week, and--

MN: Did you know somebody at Florence Stove, is that how you got the job?

MS. Y: I'm trying to think. No, I don't remember that it was through any connection, it was just that I made the application, and I made an application at Heywood's, and I kept going back, and they evidentally must have called me to come in and said, interviewed me and they said they had a job in the, of all places, I think it was the purchasing department and I worked there for a short while, and I didn't particularly like it because figures, mathematics, and things of that character are definitely not my cup of tea. And so there was an opening in the secretarial office, and they did it differently there. They had a, what shall I call it, there, there were, I think there were 8 of us, a pool, llike a pool of secretaries, and you took, and this was all on machine, you know, they dictated --

MN: This is still at Florence Stove?

MS. Y: Yeah, um umm. And I think there were 8 of us in this pool and you took the, uh, records, or cylinders that they were called at that particular time, and put them on the machine, you never knew who the man was, it was a little bit tough getting accustomed to hearing the voices and, but I managed pretty well and--

MN: For a dictating machine?

MS. Y: Yeah, um humm.

MN: This was the 1930's?

MS. Y: Hmm, '40's, cause I graduated from high school in 1938 and I don't, I, then, at Florence Stove, I worked in another department. They were a little bit ahead in the way they operated, because they had pools rather, and their filing system was the same thing. They had a great big, well, probably the whole area of our house, where all of the files were in one particular spot, and no matter whether you were a sales manager, or the purchasing manager, or, and if you wanted a file on a certain date, it was coded, so they were a little bit ahead of the game in the way they operated. And they had private offices for the executives, and they had their own files, it was only the other offices, and they would come up to you and they would say, I want the file on such, and such and such, and you would look and you would automatically see under which code it came and you would look in the file and you would automatically give them the file. And the file would have to be returned to you so that no one, no one, no one and

everyone had access to the, yeah, so there was no, I thought it was kind of an efficiency way of doing things. And then I got a call to come to Heywood's and there was a job opening and, of course, that was where I wanted to go and --

MN: Why?

MS. Y: Because my mother had worked there, my mother had worked during the war years, my father was there, my sister was there, all of my friends worked there and I wanted to work at Heywood's. And, there again, I was a little bit more fortunate than other people. The girl that worked for Mr. Greenwood and her parents who owned this house, was doing filing at Heywood's and I got a secretarial job. And, oh, she was mad at me. She said, Gee, here I've been working at Heywood's and you come in, she said, and you get a better job then I've got, you know. And so I worked for this particular fellow, it was in the credit department, and I did his records, it was more or less secretarial work, no big deal and then they renovated the offices, I remember, and the fellow that I was working for was transferred to--

MN: Somewhere--

MS. Y: Yeah, I think he was transferred to,he was really an accountant, and, but I thought he, in the employment office, or something. So then I inheirited a fellow that, oh, I liked working for him so much. And if you ever go up to the hospital, he, you will see a _Volney Howe(unintelligible) conference room

and his name, the, he was very interested and he was a part of the community and, you know when you, you know where Rose's Clothing Store is, right across the street, there is, I thought it was the strangest thing to do, there's a monument there and it says Volney Howe on it, and he worked for the Brown, Howe, and Robichaud concerns agency, Volney was a brilliant fellow and he never should have worked in the capacity that he did, he had gone to Harvard and he really should have shot for, you know, higher things. But he was killed in an accident, and why they put that monument up there across the street from Roses, whenever I look at it, I think of Volney. He was not an outgoing person and he was not an extrovert, he wouldn't have like that at all, at all, I know he wouldn't. But he was such a job to work for because he had it up here. And he left, where did he go, though? I don't remember.

MN: Weren't you and ____(X)____ fortunate that you started off in the office instead of factory work?

MS. Y: Oh, definitely.

MN: How is it that you could go in the office and you didn't have to go to the factory?

MS. Y: Well, even at that time, a high school education was a benefit, and if you managed to take a business course, and you graduated from high school, so many were drop outs, not too many kids, if they did, like some of my friends, went for a year to _____(unintelligible) Junior College, or they went to Springfield College for a year to, just for secretarial work.

And, well, we concentrated on handling a commercial course in school, so that we would be ready, you know, with our shorthand and our typing to get a job in the office, and that was one of the things that my mother and father were really hopeful that we would do, you know, do something better than they--

MN: Did they work in the office?

MS. Y: They never worked in the office, no --

MN: They worked in the factory?

MS. Y: They worked in the factory. So it was a prime thing, to get a job in the office and--

MS. X: Can I just inject one thought, __(Y)__? I, when I graduated from high school, she said it's a prime thing to get a job, and a lot of kids, not a lot, but some were able to go to a business school, like Bechler --

MS. Y: I just told her.

MS. X: So in a way, I pride myself that I was able to get to the top without being, without having a college education. You know, so --.

MS. Y: It wasn't really demanded then, you know--

MS. X: Because people didn't have the money to send kids to school.

MS. Y: No, well, that's true, that's true, people were just recuperating from the de-, depression, and things would be well, I guess Roosevelt was President at the time, and things like the WPA were afforded work for people who were unemployed

and there were a lot of agencies that were beginning, and, oh, they had something else where, forestry, where you could work for the, because the country had been neglected for so long and these things. Roosevelt was really responsible for a lot of programs that gave people employment. And my father was a great believer in the worker. He said the middle class is the working class, and it's the working class that's really making this country great. And he always had, had that feeling that you could give the working man his status in life, that he was a great man, I mean, he was really solid. He said the rich should take care of the poor and he said, the middle man, he's the one that does the work. And he didn't resent the rich man, but he felt the poor should be helped by the rich man, and that everybody should have an equal opportunity to work. And those are the years that we did best, really. My mother was, she could take a dollar and stretch it to a $10 bill, she was fantastic with money. She saved and saved and saved and bought this house. In the meantime,---

MS. X: No, the first step, priority was a car.

MS Y: Oh, yeah.

MS. X: First priority, you know, during the war years, two doors away from us was a captain of the fire department lived there. He had a Chrysler, and my mother always liked the looks of the Chrysler. So when we began talking about a car, we went and placed an order with the Chrysler dealer and we also placed an order with the Oldsmobile, hoping that the Chrysler would come

in first, which it did.So, and then, the house was the second priority.

MS. Y: Now this is after the war again and I was working in the credit department and it was dullsville, and it was writing form letters most of the time telling a dealer that he was in arrears regarding his shipment of such and such a date, etc., etc., etc. And I was going no place. And, I don't know how I dreamt of going to Chicago but I guess it was the fact that they had the Art Institute of Chicago there and I thought if I could work in the Chicago office, why, then I would be able to go, possibly on a part time basis to, to the Art School. I approached Mr. Greenwood with shaking knees and trembling hands and it just so happened that a Mr.Benzine, who was the manager of--

MS. X: He was a sales manager.

MS. Y: He was a sales manager here in Gardner --

MS. X: Of furniture

MS. Y: --of furniture in the Gardner office and he had been transferred to the Chicago office, oh maybe three months, six months, prior to my brainchild. And it just so happened he was having a great deal of difficulty getting a secretary. The salaries were much higher in Chicago and they thought the work was too much, and so I approached Mr. Greenwood right at the proper time because Mr. Benzine needed a secretary, and he said--

MS. X: -that he was, then he went into the store--

(Both speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. Y: He was also transferred into another phase of the company's work, and that was the public seating division that made the school furniture up in Manamanee, Michigan plant. So I remember, I think it was in 1945, that I went to chicago.

MS. X: No, it wasn't that early, was it? I don't know, maybe you're right, I was thinking '37 when I started.

MS. Y: No, I thought it was 1945 when I went to Chicago. For a year, mind you. And I told my mother, you know, that I wanted to go to school and I would go nights so whatever, you know, whatever --. Well, when I got to Chicago and saw this great big metropolitan area, you know, and these fine buildings and the offices in Chicago were beautiful.Absolutely--

MN: Downtown?

MS. X: No.

MS. Y: The Heywood-Wakefield offices --

MS. X: Yeah.

MS. Y: --were beautiful, and there was a girl who worked in the office, her name was Sylvia Schneider and I still, I just spoke to her yesterday--

MS. X: I just got my birthday card from her.

MS. Y: Yeah, and she was very tall and slender like you, and blonde, and she was very efficient, very, very efficient and she worked for the sales manager of the furniture line. My job was to work for the sales manager of the school furniture

division, and he made a secretary out of me. He was a dickens to work for. I didn't realize what I was getting into, but I worked, believe me, and I sweated, but he made a good secretary out of me. And I learned an awful lot from that man. And he got so he would actually, actually like a training school. He would send me down to select fabrics for theater seating and things of that character, he would send me out to the merchandise mart, which was across town, to go to the Goodall fabrics, which was internationally famous at that particular time, they had elegant offices and he'd say, I want you to look at the fabrics over there and see what you think. And so he really did an awful lot for me and I think I returned the favor by doing excellent work for him. I got, I really got to be a good secretary.

MN: And did they help you with living arrangements?

MS. Y: No, no, but the first thing he did was increase my salary to, because he said, well, how are you going to live in Chicago? You can't possibly live on the salary that you're making in Gardner. And I said, well, I had worked out some figures, you know. and so forth and so on. He said you won't be able tc live on that. So when I got to Chicago my, my salary was automatically increased, and I lived in a building with a hundred girls who were all taking up some phase of art work. They were doing dance, ballet, music, voice, instruments and things of that character. And it was, it was just a beautiful place to live but you could not work, so when I got my application

I sent it in, and there was nothing, I mean regarding, I mean, that you couldn't work, at least I don't remember how that--

MS. X: No, I thought you were given two months to stay there before you found a --

MS. Y: A place to stay.

MS. X: A place to stay.

MS. Y: In any event, oh, it was wonderful. They had, like a center atrium, and all of the rooms were, the building was, there was a center, and you could look from your bedroom down into this atrium, they had a pool with a statue, and we used to have Sunday afternoon tea there, and it was just elegant, really. But shortly, it was short lived and I had to move and, luckily, about two blocks away they had the Harriet Hammond McCormack Residential girls, and there were 500 girls in that building.

MS. X: It was some building.

MS. Y: Huh?

MS. X: And what a building. (laughs)

MS. Y: Well, I mean--

MS. X: It served the purpose.

MS. Y: Oh, yeah, really, definitely. They -. Eventually what I, this woman was very, very wealthy, Harriet Hammond McCormack. The McCormack's are a big name in Chicago on account of they're the owners, they were the owners of all the newpapers and the owners of, oh, a variety of industries, and they were very, very wealthy people and luckily, Harriet was a hum-, hum-.

MS. X: Humanitarian.

MS. Y: --humanitarian, and she built this building primarily for young girls who moved to the big city and had no place to live. And we had a beautiful dining room, we had a beautiful sun room, we had a library on the second floor, we had living rooms on the second floor, but up on the 3rd floor, up to the 10th, forget it.

(Both laugh, speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. X: --it was the size of this room.

MS. Y: What, my room?

MS. X: Yeah.

MS. Y: Oh, it was half of this. All I had was a bed and a little desk, and when you opened up the closet, it had a long mirror and it had a shelf for your, for your cosmetics, and then you had another closet for your clothes, and that was it. Oh, and you had a dresser, yeah, and you had to walk in edgewise, you know, practically.

MS. X: It was darn cheap.

MS. Y: But it was cheap. I think I was paying about $18 a week with two meals included.

MN: Oh, they had a cafeteria downstairs or something?

MS. Y: Yeah, uh huh, yeah, we had two meals, we had a beautiful dining room, but it was cafeteria style, you know, and I got to meet an awful lot of interesting girls in different areas and it was a peculiarity that the woman that was the director of the

McCormack Residence for Girls, came from Cape Cod Massachusetts and I was the only girl in the building at the time that came from Massachusetts. So I don't know if she gave me a little bit of favor or not, but we had to be in by 11:00 at night, _____(unintelligible) and it, I was going out with a fellow at the time, and we used to come in, over the weekends you could come in later, but, I mean, if you violated, I mean, any, any of the rules, and this woman stood about seven feet tall and was an immense woman, and like (X) said when she had to face Mr. Greenwood, if you ever had a misdemeanor, I mean, she would throw you out of the building, and where would you go, you know. I had to go down to see her one day. Oh, my Lord, did I ever sweat it out. I was because I had, evidently come in after 1:00, and after 1:00 you had to sign _____(unintelligible), you know, and if you did that more than twice, I guess, a month, well, then you were called down to face her, and, oh, I remember, if she throws me out, what'll I do? But she didn't favor me that particular day, she told me just where I stood, you know, and, I had, I had lived there and all of us were beginning to get very nervous about the prospect of living somewhere else on account of --

MS. X: You could only stay there, what, 5 years?

MS. Y: Five years. And then she figured that after 5 years you had really become adjusted to living in the city and that you knew your way around and you could go out on your own.So one of the girls that I was very friendly with from Kalamazoo

Michigan, we hit it off very well, we were very, very good friends, I enjoyed her and we really had fun times, we decided to go into an apartment, but once we got into the apartment, oh, I'm telling you, it was just intolerable. (Laughs) I mean, she was very dictatorial, you know, she was quite Noveau Riche for one thing, her father was a wholesale dealer in foods, and they had an awful lot of money, and Maryann knew how to spend it. She had clothes galore, and we lived in this apartment, which was very attractive. She was secretary to a vice- president of one of the banks in Chicago and she was always telling me what to do, what, what to wear, how to wear it, when to wear it and, it just got to be too much, I mean, we were, we were good friends, but I mean, the apartment--

MN: Did you get to take art classes?

MS. X: Yeah.

MS. Y: Oh, yes, oh, yes, uh huh. I went to the Art Institute of Chicago and I took painting lessons and drawing lessons and it wasn't very long before I discovered that I ---

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE B

TAPE TWO, SIDE A

MS. Y: Well, anyway, the whole experience was very wonderful for me, and --

MN: And you came back after seven years? From Chicago?

MS. Y: Um hmm, my mother became, well, my mother came to Chicago for a vacation and she stayed with me. By that time I had my

own apartment, and she stayed with me, and, God only knows. Evidentally, something happened to her on the train going home, because she had a heart attack on the day she arrived home. And it was nip and tuck for quite some time as to what I should do, and I, I decided to come home. It was a hard decision to make because at that particular time I had also, she didn't absolutely make the offer to me, but she took me out to lunch, she was an interior decorator and she wanted me to come and work for her, as a runner, and that meant that when she was doing her interior decorating, I would go and shop for vases and ashtrays, and pictures and things of that character. The girl that was working with her had _____(unintelligible) or something, I don't remember. But Marie _____ was a very fine interior decorator and, and I would have loved to have done it, it would have given me the feeling of being in the art world, you know. I had to change my mind, and I took up sewing and I did, I made all of my own clothes and --

MS. X: And they were nice, very nice.

MS. Y: I, I did a good job in clothes.

MN: And you came back to Gardner because of your family?

MS. Y: Yeah, uh huh. Well, in a way, my, my whole world fell apart, my mother died, I lost my job, I lost the possibility of getting into the art world, I had lived in the the metropolitan area and had access to, you know, so many of the museams and everything else, coming back to Gardner was awfully, awfully hard.

MS. X: Oh, yeah, for two years, she was real unhappy.

MS. Y: Oh, yeah, very, very unhappy, I thought of going to Boston to work, you know, and there were no jobs at Heywood-Wakefield Co. and Mr. Greenwood, it almost seemed at though he was doing me a favor be giving me a job, you know. And he shifted me from one department to another and finally, through the grace of God, I guess, I worked for the sales manager of the transportation seating division, and that was kind of an ally to the public seating division that I had worked in Chicago, so it wasn't too, too bad. Harmon, he wasn't the best boss in the world, but by the same token, he gave me a chance to get back into my, little bit of executive, he was an executive and I was doing a little bit more of executive type work. But the company was getting into difficulties around that time, and they decided to move the entire transportation seating division to their Manamanee plant. And that was an out, and there was no job for me. So--

MS. X: Then you began getting sick.

MS. Y: Yeah, I didn't work for, oh, I don't know --

MS. X: Oh, six, seven years.

MS. Y: Probably . And then I finally went to work part-time for Roses Clothing, which was up my alley on account of I had made clothes and things of that character and then after that I retired. So--

MN: Didn't it occur to you to go back to Chicago?

MS. Y: I, I was thinking of going to Boston, you know, and

then I was thinking, how --. In the interim, you see, the boss that I worked for originally, was transferred to Manamanee so then I worked for a junior executive that was in the office there, and it was about that time that Marie _____ made this, you know, she took me out to lunch, and I knew what it was all about, you know. But we didn't confirm anything and I was thinking, you know, what shall I do, and I loved the offices in Chicago, and I thought, gee, I don't know, you know, this is a big step.

MS. X: The office was beautiful. When she was in Chicago my mother and father and I went out several times, and the, they had a, what's that, designing room, what's that cocktail lounge they had, room of interior?

MS. Y: Oh, we were on the 11th floor, we had beautiful, we were right on Lake Michigan and we had a view of the entire lake and all of Chicago skyline and they had a, well, this was primarily for the dealers who came in to buy furniture and look at furniture, they called it the Department of Interior. It was a cocktail lounge and Marie_____ designed this particular room. It was beautiful.

MS. X: It was lovely. We used to go there, my mother and father and I, although, I went two or three times alone, first time I flew out.

MN: There was something I wanted to ask you about, when you were talking a little bit before, in Heywood-Wakefield, there was a family atmosphere. How did that work, how was

that created?

MS. X: Well, one thing was they had developed a program. A service pin program, I think Carl was pretty--

MS. Y: Responsible for that.

MS. X: --responsible, Carl Lugbauer, and if you stayed with the company for 10 years, you got a service pin, a 10 year pin and every 5 years, every 5 year group, you got a next pin, like 15, 20, 25, etc. And there was a big banquet and there were a lot of things done like the corn roast up in New Hampshire, and then the, Gardner Fish & Gun Club, then they came down--

MS. Y: They had, they had a social club.

MS. X: Social Club.

MS. Y: Social Club, and oh, they had, like you said, we had an annual picnic and we had the banquets, Heywood-Wakefield Co. had a gentleman who was a very fine musician and he organized an orchestra, the band concerts, and--

(Both speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. Y: He did a lot of things that were kind of family oriented. And Mr. Greenwood evidentally, this is an example, my father worked there, my mother worked there, my sister worked there, and I worked there, and they encouraged that sort of thing.

MS. X: Families used to come to work.

MS. Y: Yeah, if some fellow in the service department had a kid that was graduating from high school Mr. Greenwood, if the particular employee had shown good effort, he would

hire the kid, and so the father would be glad that his kid had been considered for a job at Heywood's, and there was a lot of that, an awful lot, I mean--

MS: X: There was also, excuse, a program whereby if an employee's wife, or an employee himself had been in the hospital and the difference between paying the hospital and what the Blue Cross-Blue Shield would pay, had a program, where if the head of department would say, well, Frank Como's wife was in the hospital, they had quite a big bill to pay, so Mr. _____, head department, would recommend that they pay the difference. It was called free bed fund at the hospital. I, I, that was part of my job. And so that, if the person had been a long time employee, a particularly good employee, then the head of department would recommend, you know, that the company help them out, and they did that.

MN: So they would, in fact, pay the whole hospital bill.

MS. X: Yes, the difference between the hospital and what Blue Cross & Blue Shield, if Blue Cross paid $500 and the bill was $600, then the company would pick up the difference.

MS. Y: The really, the really, really big thing was the profit sharing plan that the company --

MS. X: That was only for the office employees, though. Not for the plant, not for the plant, of course, just for the office.

MS. Y: Oh, yeah, but that was really a biggie, on account of--

MS. X: There was no program, there were no programs, any benefits, for the office people. People in the plant got raises because

the union was sticking up for them. But no body was sticking up for us in the office, you know, we'd get raises, but, I mean, a dollar, $2 raise, you know, it, and the employees in the plant got more. So when the employees get some added benefits, then the office eventually would benefit by it too, because they had to do something about the office employees.

MN: But you couldn't join the union?

MS. X: No, not, not white collar workers.

MN: So in a sense, the office workers benefited from the things that the union got the factory workers.

MS. X: Well, in a way, because when, I can't remember when the union came in, that was before our time, of course, well we did because if the, if the employees in the plant were given a 10% increase, that's just a figure, they would have to do something about the office employees, too. Supposed to be able to --

MS. Y: They would grumble, you know, the office employees would be grumbling, you know.

MS. X: You figure you work in the office, your conditions are better, you should get better results, I mean benefits, and you know, some of them had gone to college, but, the-- Heywood was not a big money spender in so far as salaries are concerned. No, self working --

MS. Y: You really had to, you really had to fight hard to get a raise, you know, if you had done a particularly good job and you felt entitled to have a raise, and you told your boss about it, you did it with a lot of trepidation.

MS. X: Merit increases weren't really that great --

MS. Y: As a matter of fact, I don't think they gave merit increases after the union came in.

MS. X: Well, they did, a few of them.

MS. Y: They might have, cause she knows better, but, actually you were just a plod, it was a plodding job, and you were there until you retired. Unless you spoke up for yourself, and---

MN: And what would happen if you did that?

MS. Y: Well, to me it was a great disappointment, I asked my boss for a raise and he said, yeah, I'll ask, you know, for you, and he went down and he said, yeah, I got a raise for you, you got a dollar more.

MN: Dollar more a week, an hour?

MS. X: A week.

MS. Y: A week.

(Both speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. Y. See, I, I felt like saying, take it back, I don't want it, you know, and those feelings started to, you know, kind of, and among the general, you know, there were girls that worked like dogs, really.

MS. X: I did it for a long time, too.

MS. Y: They really, some of us really had an awful toll. They kept adding on to my job. I worked for one man, he was the sales manager, I worked for his assistant, then I worked for the engineering department, the head of the engineering department I worked for the man who used to research, oh golly, not.

MS. X: Well, never mind, (Y), all that detail.

MS. Y: Yeah, then so I was working for eight men, and I said, gee, I'm entitled to a little more money doing all of this work, you know, but as I say, they weren't great in that--

MS. X: You know, for the responsibilites that I carried, I did all his tax work, I mean, I didn't file his taxes, I kept all the information, I paid all his bills, I had power of attorney--

MN: Company and personal?

MS. X: Yes, um hmm. And paid all his bills, took care of all his insurances, wrote letters on my own. After the first year he, there was a condition when I took over the job. That Adele if she didn't like living in California, if she wanted to come back, she could take my job over, so I said I want my job back when, if she comes back.. I don't know how I stood up for that but I did, and so Adele did not come back, there's a little more to it but that's all I want to say, so she did not come back so Mr. Greenwood called me in and said, asked me to sit down. Sit down, he says, I suppose you are aware that Adele is not coming back. I said, yes sir, I know that. And he said, well, he says, well, as far as your work is concerned, I wanted to tell you, oh when he first talked to me he told me that he's not a man who gives out compliments very much, he says, if you have a problem I want you to come to me, we'll sit down and talk it over. If I have a problem with you, we will do the same. That was just fair, I thought. So he said, as I said, he sat down, and I sat

down, and he said, I want you to know, the job is yours. And I said, oh,I says, I, does that mean you're satisfied with my work? He says yes, I find that you have taken initiative alot of times that I would have to be involved and that, I think, is a very fine trait. He says, I find that you --. I let him see all the letters I wrote, cause I didn't want to write a letter on a personal basis, something that had to do that would involve him. So if there was some charge on a bill that was excessive, I would write and show him the bill.

MN: Would you sign your name or his name?

MS. X: I would sign my name, and, secretary to Mr. Greenwood. And I'd sign my name, and so when the letters came, when the carbons came across his desk he said, I see you've got a beef with the insurance company. I said, yes. He says, he said, well, I know you'll bring it to a good result or something like that. I had a good rapport with Liberty Mutual in Fitchberg, they were great. When I took over, I didn't know much about insurance or anything, but they were great.

MN: And this is an insurance for the company?

MS. X: No, this is personal, personal. So anyway, he said, I told you once that I'm not very big on compliments, but I do want you to know I feel that you've done a fine job in this year. And so, the work was beginning to increase, because the furniture was getting back into the field. And --

MS. Y: Outside, he, he had a lot of outside interests. I mean, he would, he would be the president of this organization or he

would be the --

MS. X: Well, he was the trustee of the bank--

MS. Y; Trustee.

MS. X: Trustee of library, trustee of Heyood Memorial.

MS. Y: So there was a lot of paperwork involved and he would--

MS. X: That was all on a personal basis, though, those were personal, not the bank's, but the libary, and the Greenwood Memorial, they were personal, but the banks, we dealt with the banks. And I thought that was a --

MS. Y: He was a great family man himself.

MS. X: Oh, yes.

MS. Y: A great family man, and it was a, it rolled over into his, the way he operated the company, you know, he was--

MS. X: It--

MS. Y: I think he would be very, very hurt if he ever learned of somebody that didn't agree with him or something after he had given them a job or what not. He was the kind of a man that walked through the plant, you know, and walk by my father and say, "Hi, Dick, how are things going?" He knew practically everybody by first name.

MS. X: He did, yeah. Every Monday morning he would come, if he wasn't away on a trip, he'd come, his home, you know where American Legion is, that was his home. Not the way it is now--

MS. Y: Oh, it was a lovely home.

MS. X: Elegant home, it was lovely --

MS. Y: It was a mansion, really.

MS. X: Yeah, it really was lovely. Well, when he divorced his first wife and he was getting remarried, he sold the house at that site, and he had a 17 room house down in Plymouth, and oh, it was lovely there, it had 17 rooms, I stayed there several times. He'd call up and say, you doing anything tomorrow and I'd say, no _____(unintelligible) and he' d say, how would you like to drive my mother down here. she lived in Fitchburg and we'd go down, and it was a cardinal sin if you did not stop at Gault Farm for vegetables and particularly corn. They were great, the colors just fantastic. He was a great guy on lobsters, he used to entertain, you knew that lobster was on the menu all the time, he just loved doing it. And that 17 room, had a veranda, where you'd putz around the house.

MS. Y: Yeah, and then they had that game room downstairs.

MS. X: Oh, that was, that--

MS. Y: It's where these lobster feasts would be held.

MS. X: Yeah, but that's in the new house, so he didn't have a game room in the big 17 room house.

MS. Y: Oh, no.

MN: Were you treated as an employee or a friend, or how?

MS. X: Very comfortable, I was very comfortable there. His daughter married, who married later George Heywood, she had a bad first marriage, and she had a son and so when she got divorced her father said, you come back to Plymouth and live at the big house, which she did. When I was down there, one

of the things, he called me up that's when he was getting divorced, and his first wife was, telling the things she wanted, I mean, she told the lawyer what she wanted in the way of a settlement and so forth. One of the things was a house, which she wanted down in Plymouth, so he had to buy her that and furniture. Well, she wanted a dining room set, that was an heirloom, lovely set, made of Arcacia wood, the wood used in the building of the Ark and so he, he didn't want her to have that, so he would buy her furniture that she wanted, with his connections in the field, he got her some furniture. And so , one of the things she wanted like china ware and dinnerware and things like that. Well, when they moved from that house, there was a big barn down in Plymouth, it was all stored there. So when the lawyer gave, Mr. Greenwood's lawyer a list of her wants, Mr. Greenwood called me down, we're going to take an inventory of what's in the house and what's out in the barn and everything. So I went down, I think it was a MOnday morning. We didn't get back till Friday. He said, I don't think it'll take us a couple day, two or three days, you know, well, we got into it and this was in the summer time and it was hot in the barn and Mary would come out there and she says, how about you two guys quitting? And I, Mr. Greenwood said it's only 4:00, she says , oh, that's OK, she says, take a shower, then we're going to have a cocktail, then we're going to have dinner. She was a wonderful person.

MS. Y: Mary was a really fine person.

MS.X: Oh, when I think of --

MS. Y: There was nothing money about her. Very down-to-earth. And in a lot of ways she was like Mr. Greenwood, she was very friendly towards people that she met, not that we had contact with her, you know, but if you did she was a very down-to-earth person.

MS. X: She was a very warm person, very warm. When she married George, as I say, she had a son, and she very tall, like you, as I say, she got married to George and she got pregnant with one child, happened to be a boy. She got pregnant second and third time, she got pregnant a fourth time and she was taken sick and I began hearing rumours about her, you know, just devastated me, I was hoping it wasn't true. One of the girls who worked with me, I told her, and she says I heard the same thing so we went in the office and I said Mr. Greenwood, we're hearing things about Mary that we feel are terrible rumours And he said, why don't you sit down, I'm afraid those rumours are true. Oh, we were devastated. She had cancer. They took the, she was at the hospital, he said, they take tests, everything, you know, and one nurse would tell another nurse, friends, and so it spread, when she was finally carrying her fourth child they brought it up to Phillips house in Boston and they took the baby away first and thought that might retard the cancer, but it didn't do any good, it spread all over her body, one place would be, you know, getting low, the medication, then another place started, I mean, she was 38 when she died.

MS. Y: And I will say that I have never, never attended a funeral like Mary Greenwood had. The church, there were baskets and flowers, the whole church up to the ceiling, how they hung them, I don't know, they had, it was a whole mass of flowers from the ceiling to the floor and then some. I think, I think it was one of the greatest devastations that he had to face. 'Cause Mary was a very fine person. Very nice person.

MN: Did he have other children?

MS. X: Oh, yeah, he had Ricky, Ricky Greenwood, he was the youngest and then he had a daughter between, Druscilla, and she lives in Plymouth, too, and she has three boys. She married, well, in the family, Worthington family, they're lawyers and they ran some manufacturing place, Plymouth Rubber Co. or something like that, I can't quite remember, recall.

MS. Y: Drucie wasn't here very much. Really.

MS.X: No, 'cause when they moved from Gardner the family went with him. The whole family. 'Course Mary was married at that time, but Drucie got married and she lived in Plymouth, 'course her mother _____(unintelligible). so she was in Plymouth. His wife was a fantastic cook, particularly pastries, and--

MS. Y: The first wife.

MS.X: The first wife.

MN: Was the second wife someone that worked in Heywood-Wakefield?

MS. X: No, no, her husband was on the board of directors, and they got involved, I guess, so she divorced, and he divorced and they married.

MN: And the other question was Mary's arrange-, marriage with George Heywood, was that an arranged marriage?

MS. X: No, no it wasn't an arranged marriage but George--

MS. Y: But it was a good marriage.

MS. X: For him, particularly, because he was getting the Heywood's and the Greenwood's--

MN: That's why I wondered if it was arranged.

MS. Y: No, I guess--

MS. X: I think, George, as much as George should love it, pardon me, I shouldn't say that, but no, he and Mary got along very nicely and, but when the fourth baby came along, when she got pregnant with the fourth child, I remember the Sunday she died, it was in June and my boss was at the furniture market in Chicago, they didn't know, you know, she'd rally and she'd go down, she'd rally and she'd go down, and so he kept in touch every day. I happned to go to work one Sunday afternoon, always, I always worked at nights and brought stuff home. I loved it, that didn't bother me, I was working at the office and George came in and I had received a message from Mr. Greenwood, he called from Chicago and called home so I was at the office, he called the office and told me that Mary, that Mary had passed away, and George came in and he said, have you heard the news? I said, yes, Mr. G. called me, he said, well, I asked him how

it went, and he said, she just slipped away. And, then he remarried after that, you know, married a woman that, her husband's background was, this is before your time, Lydia Pinkham, that was her--

MS. X: Compound, have you ever heard of Lydia Pinkham compound? It was, it was a, an elixer of life. It would take care of all of your illnesses. If you had a head ache, take Lydia Pinkham, if your toe was hurt, take Lydia Pinkham, if you had an earache, take Lydia Pinkham.

MS. Y: If you had menstrual pains, you'd take Lydia Pinkham. And her husband was--

MS. X: But he died, too. (Backgroun noise, unintelligible) and I laughed and he said, (unintelligible) I think he said the reason that Lydia Pinkham's sold so well is that the government finally found out there was so much alcohol in it. (All laugh) Yeah, and that's why it helped so--

MN: Oh, I didn't know the connection.

MS. X: And she was a very attractive woman, very attractive and she had four children, too, I guess.

MS. Y: So George inheirited quite a family.

MS. X: I see him occasionally, he looks good, he still looks good, my God, he--

MS. Y: He looks good. He looks, I just can't get over it when I see him downtown. He looks --

MS. X: He's slim all the time, he aged a little, but I mean, not that great.

MS. Y: No, I mean, and I saw her at Stop and Shop last week, she's put on a little weight, she's a pretty, pretty--

MS. X: Attractive.

MS. Y: Attractive woman, and put on a little weight, outside of that, I always forget her name, though.

MS. X: Nancy.

MS. Y: Nancy.

MN: Well, would you see, for example you say you saw her at Stop and Shop, would have seen President Greenwood's wife at Stop and Shop --

BOTH: No, No, they didn't live, they didn't shop that way.

MS. X: Because, Martha, when I got the bills, they would have , I forgot the name of the grocery store, they had, in those days you didn't have these big supermarkets when I was working for him, you had a lot of little local stores like we have Bonk's down here, and but they had a certain grocery store that they did their business, so their cook would call, they had a cook and they had two or three maids, two anyway, I know. One was Laura Maywaller, they would call what they needed and the store would bring it up and deliver the stuff, you know, and the cook would check over what was in the packages, make sure it coincided with what she ordered and then the bill was given to Mr. Greenwood and I would check it for price extensions and things like that, and pay it. And that's what they usually did. And the same thing with lobsters, they had a place that they bought lobsters, yeah.

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MN: So they led a life apart from the ordinary person.

MS. X: Yes, yes, as I said, that 17 room house, I think it was the house that he was born in, his sister Ella was--

END OF SIDE A

SIDE B

MS. X: ---he sold the house, I mean, he definitely had to be down at Plymouth, but what he did here, he took an apartment in Gardner, so that he would have a place to stay during the week and then leave on Friday's and come up on Mondays.

MS. Y: It was almost like a commuting proposition with them. It meant nothing for them to drive down to Plymouth, you know, and Dick would do it at the drop of a hat.

MN: And what did you say about Monday mornings, he would go through the plant and what?

MS. X: Yeah, he would go through the plant and see if anybody had any problems, and how are you? Is your wife still sick, etc, etc. He would do that, Well, I won't say every week, because --

MS. Y: Not every week.

MS. X: Maybe once a month.

(Both speak at same time, unintelligible)

MS. Y: But I mean, he was a, his face was seen, I mean in

the factory, you know, the people had an admiration for him in that, the way, as I say, he was fantastic in the way he remembered first names.

MS. X: Oh, he had a memory that was--. That why I, he always challenged me, alot of times, not always, but a lot of time, he'd say, Do you remember my writing a letter to Earl Lewis on such and such a --. I'd say, yeah. He says I don't remember it. So I'd say, I'll give you the file copy. So I brought it over to see the anwer to it. But that was very rare, I mean , and another thing, used to get a charge out of [illegible], and my vocabulary was pretty good, but not like his. _____(unintelligible) dictionary now. Need any help, Laura.? I said, No, thank you. I always thought that if I did it myself, I would remember, but I, oh, there were times when I had to engage his help. And, but one thing I liked about him is, we had an intercom and whenever he wanted me he'd press the intercom which I'd got in my office separate from him, and he, he would never say, come in here or do this, do that, he'd say, do you have a minute? Do I have a minute? My God, I got eight hours for you if you want it, man. But he never said come here, always, do you have a minute? No matter what it was, he was upset about something, I did something, it was always, do you have a minute?

MN: And did you ever help him with the President's message?

MS. X: No, no, the president's message, it was inner shop news, each executive would write a message each month, I mean

it would be Mr. Greenwood one month, next month, it would be George Heywood, then it would be the sales manager, and so forth, unless there was something very important that had to brought to the attention of the employees and the executives, then he would write a special message.

MN: In the early days, he wrote it?

MS.X: Yes.

MN: Only he wrote it.

MS. X: yes.

MS. Y: You know, he was very, very capable, I mean, and if he needed assistance, he would probably call Carl, you know,or one of the other executives, I mean, to make sure that whatever he was presenting in his message was the proper thing, you know. So he didn't have to lean on the secretary--

MS. X: No.

MS. Y: --because it was mainly, oh, something to do with production or--

MS. X: Yeah.

MS. Y: --or, he went into a lot of subjects, really.

MS. X: He, he was a handsome man, too. Very good looking man, and as I say, everybody liked him. Everybody. When he left, when he was leaving, 'cause he was forcibly retired by his son-in-law, which is common knowledge, he went out to the plant and he shook hands with every single employee and told them how he wished them good luck, etc., etc.

He'd employed a few French girls who'd come down from Canada

didn't know a word of English, so as he approached them, he stopped them, he found out they were new employees, you know, and this one girl burst into tears and she sat down and she cried and cried. Finally the head of department came to her and wanted to know what she was crying about. Another French gal who spoke some English translated what had transpired and it seems though the girl thought Mr. Greenwood was firing her. (Laughter) Anyway, he went through the entire plant and bade everybody goodbye.

MN: Did they feel badly that he was leaving--

MS. X: Oh, yes.

MN: --or they didn't care?

MS. X: Oh, no, alot --, especially the older generation, the older employees had 15, 20, 25, 30 years of service, I mean , it was their second home.

MS. Y: People just couldn't believe it.

MS.X: No, no.

MS. Y: I think it was a case of, I don't believe it. It came as such a --

MS. X: Well, it was a shock, and when, we knew what was transpiring, Jennie and I, and, because we heard conversations by George and, you know, and she and I being Polish we could talk at will about what we thought, and so forth, you know, we could put our ears over the--

MS. Y: Glass partitions.

MS. X: --glass partitions wouldn't go up to the ceiling

MN: And who was Jennie?

MS. X: --on the other side. Jennie's a girlfriend, a very good friend of ours, and, Jennie French --

MS. Y: She worked for Mr. Greenwood.

MS. X: Yeah, she worked in the same capacity when I first started, half for Mr. Greenwood, half for the treasurer. And so we had an advantage there. We said, what is going on?

MS. Y: Jennie worked primarily with the stocks and bonds--

MS. X: No, no, stocks, stocks --

MS. Y: --transfer of stocks--

MS. X: Yeah, I did that prior to when she came into the office. So, as I say, she and I discussed it, I said, there's something rotten going on. We knew there was a raider, picking up common stock, and holding it in street name, and couldn't find out who was holding all this stock. Well, it was held in street name. Some of the people we called, people who we thought were loyal to our, my boss, were putting him up for president, George. And, but, I, I finally spoke to Mr. Greenwood once,Jennie and I decided that we better, just in case he doesn't know, but he did know what was going on. But he couldn't come up with the money to buy the extra stock, so Simplex Time Recorder came in and bailed us out, but it wasn't a real bail, because that, because even George didn't have that kind of money, I think over a million dollars for the stock. And the only bad thing was that the family did not have a majority of

and that's an oversight that a lot of people can't understand why. I suppose that they always felt secure that they would always be head of the company. But it didn't work out that way. So then, when he was, he was down in Plymouth, one day he called up, he called up his son and so Ricky came up to my office and he says, Can I see you and Jennie? I said, yeah, He says, up in the conference room. So we went up in the conference room and he told us what had transpired. Mr. Greenwood sold some of his land. He had been approached by Boston-Edison Co. and they approached him, he later told us he's, , he's cutting the lawn, mowing the lawn. Tractor sitting there, dirty old clothes, he says. And he'd, he was mowing the lawn and this great big limosine drove up and two men got out. Mr. Greenwood was wondering what was happening. He knew somebody was coming up because they were way in from the road, Rocky Hill Rd., and there was a, one of those electrical wires across the road, so whenever anybody crossed that wiring it rang in the big house and you knew that somebody was coming up. And --

MS. Y: Ricky was very, very mechanically inclined and I guess he might have put in a radar line, or something. You know, Ricky was very, very clever, I mean, he--

MS. X: He did not want to be like his father. He said I don't have that kind of character, sit behind a desk. He said I like mechanical things. He didn't go to college, he told his father flat out, he said I don't want you to

spend the money. He said I'm not going to learn the things that you do because I don't have any interest in it. He said I'm mechanically inclined, that's what I want to do. Course his father was disappointed, but then, what could you do. And so, oh, the men approached him and Mr. Greenwood asked who they were and they told him, they want to talk to him. All right, come into the house. Went in the house. And they told him they wanted to buy his land, he had over two hundred acres and it was prime land, right on the ocean and, well, I guess they sold a pretty good story and he talked it over with the family and felt, well, he's getting along in years, too --

MS. Y: He had his family to take care of and Ricky had his own business by that time.

MS.X: And then the house is too big, 17 rooms you know, so I guess he sold 200 acres and left 25, I think for himself. And he built that new home. Oh, I said to him, what's gonna, how about the big house? He said I've done a lot of thinking about that. Oh no, the memories, the events, it's been in the family so long. He said, it's been a torturing decision, but like you said, I'm getting along, kid's are well off now, they don't want a big place like this, so he, he sold it to Boston Edison Co. and on that land is Pilgrim Nuclear Plant. If he were, oh I tell you, if he were alive, I think he'd kill himself. To think a nuclear plant and all that trouble they've been having with that plant, you know. Oh, and he

said, when they approached him, it was gonna be a beautiful site, and it was. Flowers, grass, I think he had a pass to go there everyday, they built a strip out into the ocean so you could, you know, walk up and down the strip. So after-

MS. Y: So did he know it was going to be a --?

MS. X: Oh, he knew it was going to be a nuclear plant but never knew there was going to be such a disastrous thing, and now it's so close to the people and everything, you know. And he built himself a beau-, beautiful home. That's where the game room was, he had a special stove built--

MS. Y: He tore down the old family house.

MS. X: Yeah, it had to be torn down. Yeah, and Boston Edison gave him three trailors, I think. I said to him, what are you going to do with all the furniture and everything? And he said it was going to be a hard decision and transfer 17 rooms of furniture and dishes, etc., etc. And the house he built was very lovely. Cape Cod exterior, you know, and the game room was downstairs and it had a huge swimming pool. The water was pumped in from the ocean so you had ocean water and you were swimming there. And all flowers around. The game rooms down stairs and the liquor room was down stairs. He always called me up and say I'm low on gin, I'm low on this. Paul Foss is coming down, I don't have enough rum for him. So I'd call Berenson in Boston and they'd deliver down there. And, and then it had, three showers there so after you came out of swimming you'd have to go up to the main house, you took a shower there, you went to the upstairs

to get dressed. So, when he had those three trailers. After he built the house, he told Rick he was going to build a guest house, that was before the house was still finished, and so Rick said, well, that's going to cost a pretty penny, you know. _____(unintelligible) and a sitting room, a huge fireplace, at the end of the kitchen. The cook's name was Dorothy, she was black, she was like a nanny, she was, she was terrific, she was really great. When she came up for the funeral, she cried through the whole service. And you could hear her, hear her sobbing, you know. But that's the way he was, everybody loved him, and, but, what was I, oh, so Rick said to him, "Why don't you see if you can get one of those trailers from Boston-Edison?" he said, "Well, what am I going to do with it?" Rick says,"There's plenty of land to put it in. Right off here, off the road, you could put it in there and fix it up so it looks like a house, you know, and flowers and so forth." So Mr. G. approached Boston-Edison, they gave him a trailer for a song. And that's what he did, He put the trailer into the woods, there, they planted flowers, trees, nice, the trailer had the living room was a good size room, all of this. And small kitchen, of course, and then a bath and one bedroom that had double bed, and the other bedroom had two bunks. Well, when Jennie, Mr. Greenwood would call us up and he said "you doing anything over the weekend?" I said, "Nothing special" And he said, "Well, I asked Jennie

and I asked John," that's her husband, he said, "he'll do the driving." He asked, and we'd go down for a weekend down there.

MN: Would you see him even after he left ---?

MS. X: Oh, yes, this took place after he left. Um hmm. After he left, After he built this -- before and after he built the house.

MN: And would you do any work for him after he left Heywood-Wakefield?

MS. X: No, no.

MS. Y: It was purely a social visit.

MS. X: Yeah, yeah, strictly social.

MS. Y: He kept in touch, he kept in touch with people that --. (Doorbell rings)

MS. X: Oh, yes.

MS. Y: --he was fond of and --.

MN: I was thinking about this, sort of loyalty that people had to Mr. Greenwood, and the loyalty to the company was really because they were loyal to him.

MS. X: Part of the reason was, um hmm.

MN: And I was wondering how he responded to the different kinds of changes in the company, like when, I would say, I understand there were some strikes in the '50's and later in the '60's?

MS. Y: I think that hurt him a great deal, and I think his attitude and his--

MS. X: Some, I think some, but most people, I don't think, were against him. I think some, some were, but I think he held the loyalty of a lot of people up to the end.
MS. Y: Oh, I think he held the loyalty, I think he was chagrined to think that people would stay out on a strike, what did it last, 3 months?
MS. X: Oh, it was more than, remember you and I went to Boston on a Friday night to see Harry Belafonte and the strike was on there, and I said to Mr. Greenwood, I said, "I had plans to go to Boston, " that's why I had asked the afternoon off, and I said, "I will change my plans and stay," because he wanted typing to be done and so forth. And he said, "No, you made the commitment to (Y) and yourself and you're going to go, there's no reason why you should stay. It's not gonna to be solved today, " he says, "that's for sure. And next week when you get back, " he says, "don't worry, there'll be plenty enough for you to do." So, so we went, but--
MN: So you continued to work during the strike?
MS. X: Yes,
MS. Y: The office, um hmm.
MS. X: When there was a long strike, what was it, 3 months?
MS. Y: That was a devastating strike that did a tremendous amount of damage to the company, I mean, and to the people, I don't know why the people stayed out that long, even the union, because they never recouped the money that they lost.
MN: What year was that?
MS. X: I can't remember what year that was.

MS. Y: That went on and on, there were meetings at the City Hall in Gardner and the pros and the cons and--

MS. X: And even, even the ministers and priests got involved in it.

MS. Y: Because the whole, everybody was going to welfare and because they had no money.

MS. X: Not welfare.

MS. Y: Well, unemployment, because they had no money and everything else, oh, the town was getting to be a--

MS. X: And fortunately, there's a big French population in this town, and it affected the church also, people weren't giving the money, because they didn't have anything to give, you know, and I know that--

MS. Y: Little children, I mean, I talked to a lot of people that were very much against the strike and didn't want to participate in the strike, but the union were, I mean, the leaders and, I mean, they were picketing, you know, and Mr. Greenwood saw it all and he saw the people that were picketing and it, it, it must have hit him personally, it must have.

MS. X: It did. He, he felt that he was pretty decent, you know, and _____(unintelligible) sitting down at the table and discussing, that's where the union had the strong effect on the union members. The company's only giving 10¢ an hour, we want 25¢. Well, you've got to come to a compromise somewhere along the line.And it got to a point where, you know,

you've got to compromise somewhere along the line. And it got to a point, well, two or three months strike, well, after that people, they're willing to come back for 1 penny. But-

MN: What did you say about the church?

MS. X: Well, I know, my boss, Mr. Greenwood told me he got back from one of the meetings and, oh, I know what it was, I didn't even know the pastor of St. Joseph's church was involved, and when the pastor passed, when the Father, passed away, I asked Mr. Greenwood if we could take, Jennie and I, because we both belonged to that church, could take the morning off because of a priest who died, and Mr. Greenwood said, "By all means, Mr., Rev. So and so, was a wonderful man at the table." He said, "He didn't go for the company or for the union, he made some points," he said, "that really gave the union some things to think about." And, he was a great priest, he only lasted 7 years, he took too many responsibilities, I mean, you know, and, but Mr. Greenwood really applauded him, he said he was a very fine man.

MN: So it involved everyone in the community.

MS. Y: It did, it did, because--

MS. X: Oh, Yeah (Both speak at same time, unintelligible) The stores were too, after all, peope weren't buying clothes or, just the necessities of life,and--.

MS. Y: And they knew in their hearts that it wasn't going to do them any good, in order to recoupt the money that they had lost, even with unemployment paying them somthing, it

would take years, I mean, to--

MS. X: No, no, there's one point, it just dawned on me, they were not able to get unemployment, they were on strike.

MS.Y: The union, the union was feeding them,t he ones who needed help.

MS.X: Yeah, after all they couldn't give them a $100 a week or $200 when they were on strike, you know, so that, forget that, so that's why the businesses and churches were involved and, businesses were going down, when you're out 2, 3 months, that takes a big dent.

MN: And it wasn't just one strike, I understand that some years there would be more.

MS. X: There was another one, another strike. That time you and I went to Boston, that was 6 weeks, that was a six week strike.

MS. Y: Yeah, it got to the point where you just couldn't understand, I mean, the intelligence of some people.

MS. X: Oh, I, I was going to say, I can understand their point of wanting more money. And sit down at the table and talk about it, discuss it, you know, why we can't do it, why they want it, but, he said, when you've got such a wide difference, I mean, you just, you just can't give in, you know.

MS. Y: All the demands that they wanted.

MS.X: Which means, if they give all that, that means the furniture prices are going to go up, too, And then the dealers are squawking, hey the prices are too high. The

competition. You know, when you're the head of a company like that, you have to think about those things.

MS. Y: The whole picture of furniture in Gardner after that I mean, we used to point with pride, the Heywood-Wakefield Co., oh my God, there used to be so many companies in Gardner making furniture. This was, this was the furniture center of the United States. But, it became, everything started to fold and now--

MS. X: Course, it's a different type of life now, there's computers, I mean, it's not wood furniture, it's all metal now, steel, your computer, your VCR 's and so forth--

MS. Y: Well, people still buy furniture--

MS. X: Well, yeah.

MS. Y: --you go into LaChance's, and my goodness, a cocktail table, it's a lot of brass that's coming to effect and glass tops, and you look at the price tags and almost faint. And beautiful--

MS. X: Sofas.

MS. Y: And Heywood did davenports and things of that character, not to a large extent--

MS. X: No, after all, they were wood mostly.

MS. Y: Yeah.

MS. X: But they did do the colonial--

MS. Y: Did Smith do the upholstery?

MS. X: Yes, Smith did a lot of the upholstery. They got the frames made in the plant here and they'd be sent over to Smiths. and upholstered there and then they'd be shipped out. Then

Smith was a big dealer of Heywood-Wakefield furniture. He bought a lot of furniture, Heywood-Wakefield, he sold it to a, far less price than it would be if you went to Boston or New York if you went to a dealer, see, so he had trade people coming up from Connecticut, New Hampshire, all the--

MX. Y: He saved on the freight, you see. He was able to do it. Alot of people, of course, resented it, and some of the dealers thought it was unfair, you know, thing to have a dealer right here in Gardner who just had to go to the factory and pick it up, and didn't have to have a beautiful showroom to display the furniture, I mean, there were, you know, a lot of griping about--

MS. X: Well, if he didn't have that overhead, his own place here.

MS. Y: Well, what does all this interview mean to you?

MN: Well, let me ask you a question now, and I'll tell you that, OK? My last question is, when you were telling me some of the things you did, it struck me that if you had been men you might have moved into much higher position. It also struck me that maybe part of your frustration was that there wasn't anywhere for you to go because you were a woman. Is that fair of me to say that?

MS. X: Yeah, I would say so.

MS. Y: Oh, definitely.

MN: You were limited where you could go because you were a woman in the company.

MS. X: Because we were just secretaries, clerks, you know,

and telephone operators, and there weren't any, there was only one woman in the plant when I first started working, and that was Charlotte Riggs, remember, she was working with Carl, she worked first with Ray Reed and then with Carl. Ray Reed left to be an editor of that retailing news. And Charlotte, she didn't stay here very long because she got better offers and she went to Boston, I think.

MS. Y: Yes, there were no, no other steps you could take, I mean you couldn't go up the ladder any further.

MN: You couldn't, for example, become head of the, what department did you work in in Chicago, or production department, or --?

MS. Y: No, no, I was the secretary, but at least in Chicago the salary compensates for the fact, I mean, that you didn't, well, I was there for quite a long time when my boss went to Manamanee and I handled all the correspondence, all the fills, all the inquiries, did everything, all by myself.

(All talk at once, unintelligible)

MN: Without his title.

MS. Y: Oh, definitely, definitely. I mean, it was just that--

MN: And without his salary.

MS. Y: It was just that I felt a loyalty and I was capable because Mr. Benzine had taught me so much about what was to be done, oh, I couldn't make major decisions, or anything of that character, or could I sit in on meetings, I mean, that would, you know, determine what was going to be manufactured

and what was going to be dropped and so forth and so on.

MN: Did it occur to you that you would like to move into management rather than secretarial?

MS. X: Well, not at that time, because it wasn't that prevelent, it wasn't, it was the situation.

MS. Y: This was in the 60's?

MS.X : Oh, yeah, well, I started from 49 till 1966 or 67.

MS. Y: After that, I mean, the whole picture changed, you know, the whole country underwent a change.

MN: After the 60's?

MS. Y: In the 60's.

MS. X: Another thing was --

MS. Y: Computers, computers came--

MS. X: Yeah, that's right, into being.

MS. Y: --into being. We had computers at Heywood-Wakefield Co. in the payroll department and we were one of the first and--

MS. X: Another thing is, you know when Simplex Time Recorder took over the company the head man, he didn't believe in advertising. He said that they had a corner on the market what they're producing, you know. So they came into Heywood's-- no advertising. Well, Carl Lugbauer, how can you, how can you sell without advertising. He said, "Well, we do it at Simplex Time." but that's a different company--

MS. Y: Commodity.

MS X: Yeah, commodity, And as I said, he said the market's

cornered there, and furniture's very, very competitive, and I just wondered how things would have turned, you see, then they voted George into the president and his brother John into executive vice-president, and, what, I just wonder how long it would take, it would have taken Kirt Watkins to get things straight. Kirt Watkins was no dumbbell, he was no dumbbell.

MS. Y: He was a smart person, very, very smart.

MS. X: The saddest thing that happened, he died within three years of the company.

MS. Y: He was in England, wasn't he?

MS. X: No, he a heart attack and died in Gardner. Jennie called me and told me, you know, she-

MS. Y: I thought Watkins died in England.

MS. X: No, he died here, because Kirt Watkins was sending over his treasurer and comptroller and you can do this, you can't do this and, you know, just wondered how--

MS. Y: I think the whole thing, actually, that saved this community from getting wiped off the map, was that Dukakis named it a Heritage State Park and then what we see today, because after that, I mean, with the Heywood plant closing, the community went down because there were so many people that worked in the plant, and without that, people had to go out of town to look for jobs. Today it's nothing to commute to Boston, you know, on a daily basis. A lot of people commute everywhere. But in those days it wasn't quite that popular,

And I guess really, there's been a tremendous change--

MS. X: In this town, there certainly has been a great change. When Heywood-Wakefield went down, sure a lot of people went over to Simplex , a lot of people had to go out of town to get jobs, too, you know.

END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE B